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Beacon Health System to acquire Ascension Healthcare System

FILE | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Lee Hospital in Dowagiac

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN — Beacon Health System, the locally owned and governed nonprofit healthcare leader in northern Indiana and southern Michigan, has signed a definitive agreement to acquire the Ascension healthcare system in southwest Michigan. The transaction is expected to close this summer, subject to standard regulatory approvals.

Once the transaction is complete, Beacon Health System will own Ascension's network of four hospitals, 35 outpatient clinics and an ambulatory surgery center. The hospitals include Ascension Borgess Hospital, Ascension Borgess Allegan Hospital, Ascension Borgess-Lee Hospital and Ascension Borgess-Pipp Hospital. The largest facility is Ascension Borgess in Kalamazoo, a 422-bed acute care hospital. The system has more than 2,700 associates, including 261 providers.

Gruber

"Beacon Health System's primary focus is to deliver outstanding care to our communities. Expanding our reach deeper into southwest Michigan broadens access to high-quality, affordable care for communities served by Ascension, extends our service area and provides growth opportunity to further strengthen the health system," said Kreg Gruber, Chief Executive Officer of Beacon Health System. "This acquisition will create a bright future for these communities by ensuring access to quality healthcare services for generations."

The teams at Beacon Health System and Ascension are committed to working together to ensure a smooth transition for team members, physicians and consumers. Current Ascension patients will continue to receive the same excellent care from the providers they trust, with minimal, if any, disruption to patient care and community

See BEACON, Page A8

EF-1 tornado confirmed in Edwardsburg after Sunday storm

COMMUNITY REPORT

EDWARDSBURG — The storms that ripped through Michiana Sunday spawned a brief EF-1 tornado in Edwardsburg, the National Weather Service has confirmed.

The tornado started in a field west of Conrad Road, snapping and uprooting trees as it moved northeast towards the Edwardsburg Primary School, where EF-0 damage was noted. The tornado continued to the northeast and intensified, where several homes and businesses sustained damage on the east side of Pleasant Lake.

The Starboard Choice Marina building sustained roof damage, a boat lift and dock were removed from the lake and flipped over and a few boats were damaged as well, including one that was flipped and lifted over a fence. The most intense damage was seen along Dailey Road, where numerous large trees were snapped and uprooted, with estimated wind speeds of 100 mph.

Overall, the tornado was on the ground for three minutes and had a peak intensity of EF-1. There were also areas of straightline wind damage noted throughout Edwardsburg, indicative that the tornado was likely embedded within the line of storms that moved through.

Leaderpub.com will be updated as more information becomes available.

Notre Dame, Visa to launch inaugural Visa Fintech Foundations program

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Through a pilot partnership between Visa and the Meruelo Family Center for Career Development, University of Notre Dame undergraduate students now have the opportunity to learn about the financial technology (fintech) industry while also exploring career possibilities in the field.

Launched as a pilot program at Notre Dame in the fall of 2024, the Visa Fintech Foundations program explores the intersection of technology and traditional financial services in weekly in-person, on-campus sessions. Facilitated by Visa subject matter experts, the program covers various foundational components of banking, digital currencies, decentralized finance and career opportunities to demonstrate how technology is reshaping the future of financial affairs worldwide.

"In recent years, we have seen growth in the number of employers interested in hiring students with fintech experience," said Ryan Willerton, associate vice president for career and professional development at Notre Dame. "Providing students with the opportunity to learn directly from professionals working for a global leader like Visa not only helps to improve their understanding of how technology relates to traditional banking, it also prepares Notre Dame students for potential careers in a competitive

See VISA, Page A8

'IT'S AN HONOR'

Prime Table celebrates milestone

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A popular family-owned restaurant celebrated more than three decades of serving the community Wednesday.

Prime Table, 1915 S. 11th St., Niles, celebrates its 32nd year of serving up cozy cuisine in its warm, inviting atmosphere to customers from Niles and beyond.

"I just can't believe it's been 32 years," said co-owner Bill Giannakakis. "In some ways, time flies. You kind of grow together with everybody. I'm grateful to have this opportunity to do this. It provides for my family and we're very grateful. It's a big accomplishment and we're very proud of it."

Founded by Nick and Mary Giannakakis in 1993, customers have flocked to Prime Table to eat from a menu filled with breakfast, lunch and dinner choices, including steaks and chops, sandwiches, freshly made soups, salads and desserts. Customers can also get a taste of the owner's Greek heritage in menu items like the Gyro and Greek style chicken and pork chops.

Mary and Nick moved from Greece to America in the late 1960s, when Nick started working in the restaurant industry. Today, son Bill helps to run the day to day operations of the popular dining establishment.

"It's an honor," Bill said. "I started here as a teenager with my mom and dad. We're a good family business and we're just honored and grateful. We have quite a few staff members who have been here for more than 20 years. It's a big thank you to them for their service to the community along with us."

Nick passed away in August 2024, leaving behind a legacy of joy, community involvement and wholehearted commitment to his work and family that continues today.

"I believe our focus on customer service and working together with our employees all these years – hand in hand – have allowed us to have success," Bill said. "We're fortunate to have quality employees here and a wonderful community that has supported us for over three decades."

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Prime Table owner Bill Giannakakis poses for a photo Wednesday celebrating the family-owned restaurant's 32nd year of business.

OBITUARIES

Chisa Johnson Taylor
Brenda Sue Reynolds
Patricia Hollis
Diane Kay Sink
Elmer Alfred Bella
Beverly Holt
Willie Stohrer
Kathy Faye Jones
Sandra Lynn Walker
Dwayne Mathis
Dee Wilson
James Martin
Anthony McCabe
Stephen Michael Dunifin
Mark L. Poehlman
Willie Stohrer
Marilyn Annette Barbour
Timothy Dowling
DeFord "Dee" Wilson

A6

Notre Dame Falls to TCU in Sweet 16 B1

6 54708 09550 1

FRANKLY

TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip, quip or blip? Call or text Frankly at 219-455-2349 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com

Not classified? Are you kidding me? Bombs dropped by our military in another country is not classified information?

I am so ready for amateur hour to be over. Who is running this country?

The only thing worse than being caught in a lie is to continue to lie. Fire the whole lot of our "intelligence" people.

Ten weeks of MAGA and its nothing but chaos, tyranny, incompetence, lies & higher costs for everything! Not to mention Trump is doing Russia's dirty work while Musk is doing China's. Wake up people, the enemy is now within!

Folks, a tariff is what American companies must pay our government. The US government is taxing it's own people for your car parts, your clothing, your paper and some of your food. A US tariff is a tax on the US.

Keep your ego out of my 401k.

Our national debt is finally being addressed. We need to start focusing more on how we are going to provide for ourselves in the future.

I guess leaving Afghanistan the way we did was total acceptable to Democrats. We left people behind.

All politicians seem to keep finding the loopholes and supporting one person with total disregard for the law. I expect our politicians to think for themselves and stand up for what they believe in and those they represent.

Trump's a "lame duck" president! Get out and vote!!!!!

WEATHER

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Thunderstorms	30% Chance Rain Showers	40% Chance Frozen Mix	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	50% Chance of Rain
49° 37°	44° 34°	45° 29°	38° 31°	43° 34°	48° 36°

HARWOOD LAKE CELEBRATES MAJOR MILESTONE IN REMOVAL OF EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL

COMMUNITY REPORT

JONES — Surveys of Harwood Lake found no Eurasian watermilfoil following two years of hand pulling.

Eurasian watermilfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum) was first detected in Harwood Lake in August 2021 by SWxSW Corner CISMA Coordinator Alex Florian of the Van Buren Conservation District while surveying around the lake's boat launch. After researching and planning through the winter, the Harwood Lake Association held two hand pulling events in Spring of 2022. A followup survey on June 6, 2024 by Michigan State University Extension found no Eurasian watermilfoil near the boar launch. However, a small patch was found on the opposite side of the lake. This is a promising result showing the lake is on the path to being free of Eurasian watermilfoil.

"Eurasian watermilfoil is so common in Michigan that we rarely find lakes that aren't invaded by it, especially in this part of the state," says CISMA Coordinator Alex Florian, SWxSW Corner CISMA, "and even more rare that we see cases of successful removal efforts. The volunteers on Harwood Lake should be really proud of what they've accomplished."

This fast-growing aquatic invasive species is common throughout Southwest Michigan. It is a plant with feather-shaped leaves that grows under the water. Its leaves attach to the stem at nodes with 4 leaves coming off each node. Each feather-shaped leaf has 12-20 pairs of leaflets, although hybrids with our native milfoils may have fewer leaflets. Once established, it can grow thick enough to prevent boat access and crowd out native plants. In the United States, Eurasian watermilfoil management was estimated to cost 400 million dollars in 2005.

Aquatic invasive species are easily spread by fragments hitchhiking on boating and fishing equipment. Boat launches are the most common place to find new invasive species in a lake. The Harwood Lake Association has also held boater outreach events every year to help encourage boaters to "Clean, Drain, and Dry" their boats.

Harwood Lake is one of the few inland lakes where cisco, a kind of whitefish, can be found in the state of Michigan. Cisco requires cold water with high oxygen content to survive, making them vulnerable to changes in water quality such as pollution or plant growth.

Early detection and rapid response are key to successful invasive species management. If you want to help detect invasive species, you can check out the Michigan Paddle Stewards Program for those who enjoy lake recreation, or the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program for those who live on a lake. Both programs are hosted by Michigan State University Extension.

This success would not have been possible without the many partners who helped to plan and execute Harwood Lake's response to Eurasian watermilfoil: Cass County Conservation District, the Michigan Clean Water Corps, Michigan Lakes and Streams Association, Michigan State University Extension, and the SWxSW Corner CISMA Team (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area).

For more information about invasive species, such as Eurasian watermilfoil, contact CISMA Coordinator Alex Florian at InvasivesED@VanBurenCD.org or 269-633-9044, to learn more about Harwood Lake's efforts, contact Jim Kings at jimkings.harwoodlake@gmail.com.

SUBMITTED
LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Eurasian watermilfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum) found at the Harwood Lake boat Launch on August 7, 2021.

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South Bend man gets jail time for Christmas Day police chase

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

CASSOPOLIS — A South Bend man who fled police on Christmas Day will be spending the next year in jail after being sentenced Friday in Cass County Circuit Court.

Andrew Lee Nash, 30, of South Bend, pleaded guilty to fourth-degree fleeing police as a habitual offender and was sentenced to 365 days in jail with credit for 15 days served. He must pay $1,548 in fines and costs.

Nash

The incident occurred Dec. 25, 2024 in Milton Township, beginning when Nash fled police in Mishawaka into Michigan. He ran a red light, damaged his car, hit a curb and ended up in a ditch. He left two passengers in the car and fled on foot before being arrested.

Nash also pleaded guilty to violating his probation from a 2021 conviction for possession of methamphetamine and was sentenced to 365 days in jail with credit for 87 days served.

The sentences are concurrent and can be served in any penal institution. He is scheduled to be sentenced next week in Indiana for fleeing police from an Oct. 23, 2024 incident and faces an additional charge in Indiana for fleeing police as part of the Christmas Day incident.

"His life is a wrecking ball," Cass County Prosecutor Victor Fitz said. "He has two prior resisting and obstructing police convictions, he was on probation for a meth conviction and has other cases pending in Indiana which are more of the same."

"I'm not going to belabor the facts," he added. "While recommendation from the department of corrections is good, I would ask for a prison sentence at the top of guidelines. It would reflect accurately the sentence he deserves."

Defense attorney Zachary Smith said this would be the first time Nash spends any period of time in jail. "This would be an eye opener for him," he said. "One of the Indiana charges stems from the same incident. He needs to realize he needs to stop running from police."

"This is not like the days of John Dillinger and Bonnie and Clyde when you can try to get away from one state by fleeing to another," Cass County Circuit Court Judge Mark Herman said. "When you do that now, you can be charged in both states and get jail or prison in both states."

See JAIL, Page A4

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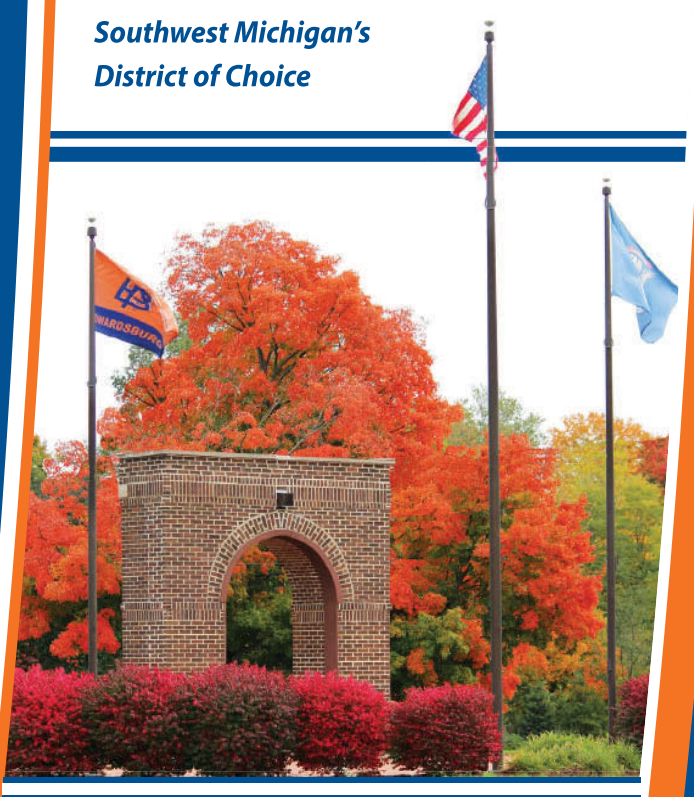

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Y5/Kindergarten	Unlimited	Seventh Grade	4
First Grade	2	Eighth Grade	2
Second Grade	5	Ninth Grade	4
Third Grade	5	Tenth Grade	2
Fourth Grade	2	Eleventh Grade	2
Fifth Grade	2	Twelfth Grade	2
Sixth Grade	10		

Applications are available and being accepted electronically, April 7 - May 2, 2025, at www.edwardsburgpublicschools.org for any Y5/Kindergarten - 12th grade student living in Cass County and contiguous districts in Berrien, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Please complete a separate application for each student.
For more information, contact Kimberly Slack at 269-663-3055 or kslack@goeddies.com.
Additional spots will be considered as they become available.

Household Hazardous Waste, Used Tired Collection scheduled for April 23

COMMUNITY REPORT

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

CASS COUNTY — As Cass County residents begin their spring cleaning, they will have an opportunity to get rid of several unwanted materials for free.

Sponsored by the Cass County Board of Commissioners, the Cass County Used Passenger Tire and Household Hazardous Waste Collection events return to Cass County from 3 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 23, at the Cass County Road Commission, 340 N. O'Keefe St., Cassopolis. With proof of residence in Cass County, people may drop off used tires from cars and pickup trucks, as well as a myriad of solid waste materials ranging from chemicals to electronics.

There is no cost to drop off tires. The road commission will continue to accept tires until 6 p.m., or until two trailers are loaded. No semi- or tractor tires will be accepted.

Those wishing to get rid of hazardous waste may drop off up to 300 pounds per vehicle. After 300 pounds, there will be a charge of $1.74 per pound. Electronics, small appliances, metal items and anything steel will be accepted at no charge. See below for a full list of accepted items:

PERMITTED ITEMS

Home
- Aerosols
- Ammonia
- Batteries (all types)
- Carpet Cleaners
- CFL & LED Bulbs
- Chlorine Bleach
- Drain Cleaners
- Dyes
- Explosives
- Floor Care & Wax
- Furniture Polish
- Lamp Oils
- Moth Balls & Flakes
- Oven Cleaners
- Scouring Powders
- Smoke Detectors
- Spot & Stain Removers
- Spray Dust Cleaners
- Upholstery Cleaners

Garage
- 2-cycle Gas Mixes
- Antifreeze
- Brake Fluid
- Car Wax
- Compressed Gas Cylinders
- Degreasers
- Diesel Fuel
- Engine Cleaners
- Fiberglass Epoxy
- Gas/Diesel Additives
- Gasoline
- Metal Polishes
- Passenger Tires
- Radiator Flushes
- Rubbing Compounds
- Starting Fluid
- Transmission Fluid

Workshop
- Adhesives & Cements
- Alcohols
- Artist Paints
- Creosote
- Cutting Oil
- Mineral Spirits
- Model Paints
- Muriatic Acid
- Naphtha
- Oil Based Paints
- Polyurethane Coatings
- Rust Remover
- Strippers
- Sulfuric Acid
- Thinners
- Varnishes
- Wood Preservatives
- Wood Stain

Garden
- Algaecides
- Ant & Roach Powder
- Bug Sprays
- Fertilizers
- Fly Strips
- Fungicides
- Garden Dusts & Sprays
- Insecticides
- Rat & Rodent Poison
- Round Up
- Misc. Chemicals

Miscellaneous
- Disposable Propane
- Cylinders (less than 20# tanks)
- Dry Cleaning Solvent
- Hobby Chemistry Sets
- Hot Tub Chemicals
- Lighter Fluid
- Mercury
- Photographic Chemicals
- Radioactive Materials
- Swimming Pool Chlorine
- Thermostats
- Thermometers

Items that will not be accepted include major appliances like refrigerators and washing machines, air conditioners, dehumidifiers, fireworks, used motor oil, fire extinguishers, ammunition, biohazards and propane tanks larger than 20 pounds.

Flags will be distributed to a local VFW to be disposed of properly.

Organizers also note that latex paint is not hazardous and may be discarded with ordinary refuse. Before discarding, people are encouraged to let the paint dry out.

No appointment is necessary for either event.

Contact the Cass County Administrator's Office at (269) 445-4420 with any questions.

Michigan AG issues new consumer alert on genetic testing services

COMMUNITY REPORT

LANSING — Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has issued a new consumer alert on genetic testing services. The new alert comes as she is urging 23andMe customers to consider deleting their accounts to protect their sensitive personal data following the genetic testing company's bankruptcy.

Attorney General Nessel emphasized in her alert the difference between genetic testing conducted for medical purposes by health care providers and testing performed by private direct-to-consumer genetic testing services.

"While DNA testing conducted for medical purposes by a health care provider is strongly protected by federal privacy laws, results from private direct-to-consumer genetic services are not considered medical records and lack these legal protections," Nessel said. "Amid the 23andMe bankruptcy, consumers should be mindful of the potential risks of these private services and take steps to protect their data."

After creating an account and receiving their report, some commercial genetic testing customers may have no more use for the service. They should consider deleting their accounts. Then they should request the destruction of any stored data.

To prevent unauthorized access or misuse of their data, account holders should:

1. Take steps to delete their account from the company's website.
2. Request the destruction of their genetic data.
3. Revoke permission for genetic data to be used in research, if applicable.

Most genetic testing services should have instructions for completing the above actions on their website.

Consumers who suspect their genetic data has been compromised can report their concerns to the Michigan Attorney General's Consumer Protection Team:

Consumer Protection Team
P.O. Box 30213
Lansing, MI 48909
517-335-7599
Fax: 517-241-3771
Toll-free: 877-765-8388

LMC Collaborative choir concert explores American choral music

COMMUNITY REPORT

BENTON HARBOR — The Lake Michigan College choral ensembles, along with several guest vocal groups, will pay tribute to American music during A Journey of American Voices at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 16, on the LMC Mendel Center Jenkins Theatre stage.

The concert will explore American music's rich tapestry, spanning from the earliest roots in traditional folk music, camp songs, and gospel to the vibrant landscapes of jazz, musical theatre, and blues. The performance will showcase the depth and diversity of the evolution of choral music.

Lake Michigan College's three choral ensembles—the LMC Concert Choir, Vocal Chamber, and Vox LMC, directed by Rebecca Derbas-Selvidge—will be joined by area guest choirs including South Haven High School Chorale, directed by Katie Hillyard; Southwestern Michigan College's Ucelli Canori and Tenor/Bass Choir, directed by Dave Carew; and Chorllennium, a collaborative group of local choir educators and choir members also directed by Carew.

The concert will reach its powerful culmination with Robert Ray's Gospel Mass, bringing together all participating ensembles. Guest artists Andrew Fisher and Friends will lead the mass, with Fisher and selected choir members featured as soloists.

This musical journey is open to the public. Admission is free and tickets are not required for this live concert event.

For more information about the LMC Visual & Performing Arts department and performances, visit lakemichigancollege.edu/arts, email mmccaffrey@lakemichigancollege.edu, or call 269-927-8876.

JAIL

Continued from page A3

"You said you wanted to flee because you wanted to stay out of jail for the holiday," the judge added. You ended up spending Christmas and New Year's in jail. It also doesn't explain why fled in October unless you wanted to stay out to go trick or treating. You just seem to be a runner."

"You need to get it out of your system now or from here on out you will spend more time behind bars," he said. "When you don't stop, the consequences are a lot worse, that's just the facts ... If your license isn't proper, it won't be as severe as fleeing or resisting police, if you have a probation violation, the consequences aren't as severe as when you flee. It's not rocket science, a kindergartener could figure it out."

An Edwardsburg woman whose husband is in prison in Indiana on drug and weapon charges was sentenced to probation Friday for drug charges.

Karen Lynn Williams, 51, of Edwardsburg, pleaded guilty to maintaining a drug house and possession of methamphetamine and was sentenced to two years probation, credit for two days served and $3,896 in fines and costs.

Williams

The incident occurred May 21, 2024 in Edwardsburg when members of the Southwest Michigan Drug Enforcement Team raided her home in Edwardsburg and found over a pound of meth, scales, $1,100 in cash and ammunition. Williams' husband was not at home and had been arrested in Indiana.

While Williams maintained that while she knew her husband was using drugs, she didn't know he was dealing drugs. "The day the police came was the first time the drugs were in plain sight," she said. "I'm guilty of knowing he used drugs but not of knowing he delivered."

Judge Herman noted that the prosecutor's office could have easily gotten convictions for drug dealing for her if the case had gone to trial. Williams would likely have received a prison sentence if that had happened. "You say you stay out of his business, you need to be in his business., drugs are something that could see you go to prison," he said.

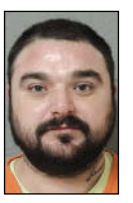
"Even if you didn't know he was dealing, you could suspect that at one point the police would show up," the judge said. "You knew drugs were in the house, maybe not the amount. You're 51 years old, not some young stupid kid not knowing what's going on."

"It's preposterous for you to expect me to believe that," he added. "Maybe it's true, but I'm not that naive. It's one thing to bury your head in the sand, it's another thing to expect others to believe you knew nothing."

A Dowagiac man is getting the chance to keep a felony drug charge off his record.

Chad Leland Velthouse, 42, of Dowagiac, pleaded guilty to possession of narcotics/cocaine less than 25 grams and was sentenced to two years probation, credit for two days served and $2,828 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred March 30, 2022 in Dowagiac. A police search of his home found baggies, cocaine and a scale.



Velthouse

Judge Herman noted that this was Velthouse's first conviction, that it occurred nearly three years ago and he hasn't been in trouble since. He told Velthouse take advantage of the opportunity to keep the charge off his record.

Niles Daily Star

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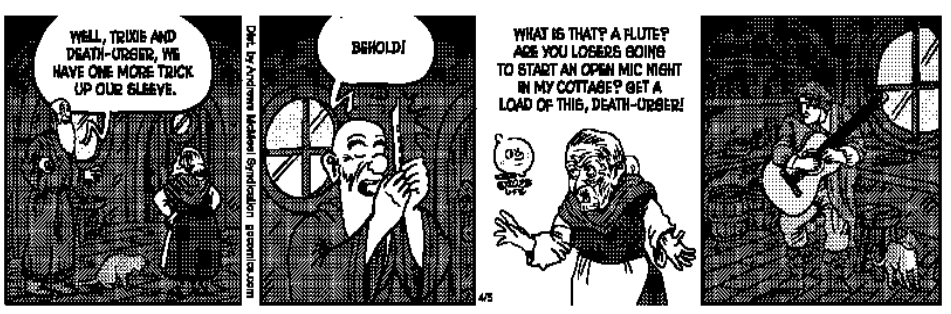
COMICS & PUZZLES

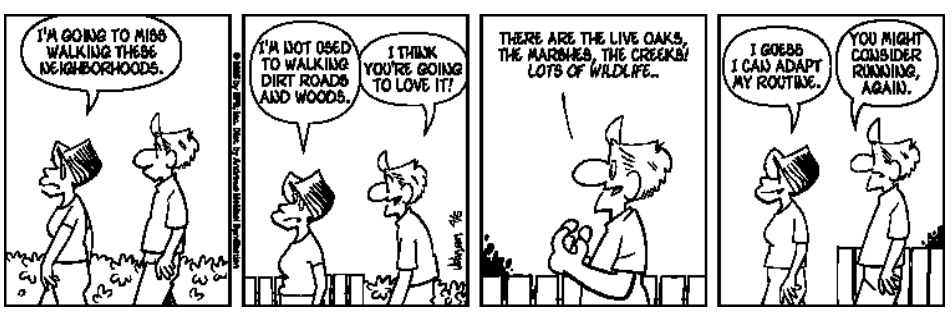
ADAM

I LOVE YOU, AND I'M SOOOO EXCITED ABOUT YOUR WRITING CAREER, LAURA.
BUT SOMETIMES IT FREAKS ME OUT 'CAUSE MINE IS GOING SO... NOT WELL.
BUT I PROMISE YOU I'M ABSOLUTELY YOUR BIGGEST...
IS THAT THE BABYSITTER CRYING IN OUR DRIVEWAY?
COVERED IN SILLY STRING, WITH SEVERAL SLINKIES KNOTTED IN HER HAIR?

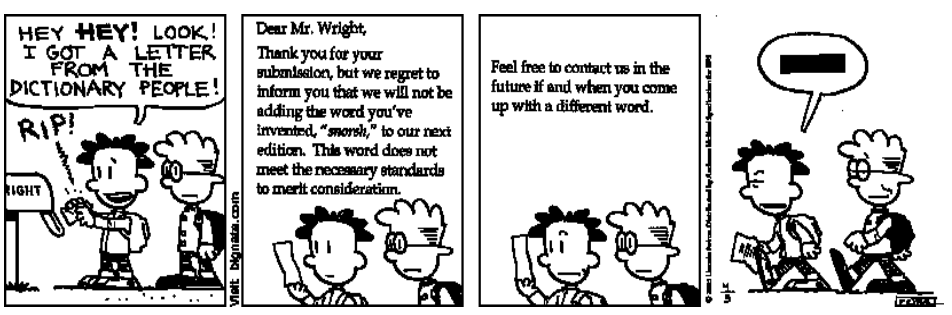
ALLEY OOP


WELL, TRIXIE AND DEATH-URGER, WE HAVE ONE MORE TRICK UP OUR SLEEVE.
BEHOLD!
WHAT IS THAT? A FLUTE? ARE YOU LOSERS GOING TO START AN OPEN MIC NIGHT IN MY COTTAGE? GET A LOAD OF THIS, DEATH-URGER!

ARLO & JANIS


I'M GOING TO MISS WALKING THESE NEIGHBORHOODS.
I'M NOT USED TO WALKING DIRT ROADS AND WOODS.
I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE IT!
THERE ARE THE LIVE OAKS, THE MARSHES, THE CREEKS! LOTS OF WILDLIFE...
I GUESS I CAN ADAPT MY ROUTINE.
YOU MIGHT CONSIDER RUNNING, AGAIN.

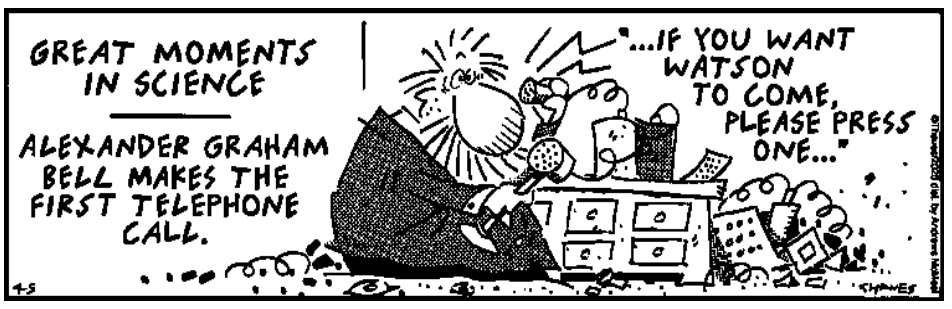
BIG NATE


HEY HEY! LOOK! I GOT A LETTER FROM THE DICTIONARY PEOPLE!
RIP!
Dear Mr. Wright,
Thank you for your submission, but we regret to inform you that we will not be adding the word you've invented, "*snorsh*," to our next edition. This word does not meet the necessary standards to merit consideration.
Feel free to contact us in the future if and when you come up with a different word.

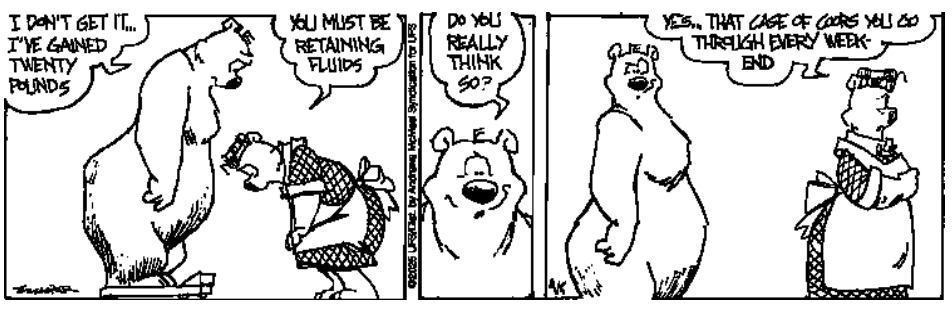
BORN LOSER

YOU ARE WRONG!
I AM RIGHT! NYAH NYAH NYAH NYAH NYAH!
CAN'T WE SETTLE THIS WITHOUT YOU RESORTING TO CHILDISH TACTICS?
HEY, I'M IN GRADE SCHOOL! WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?

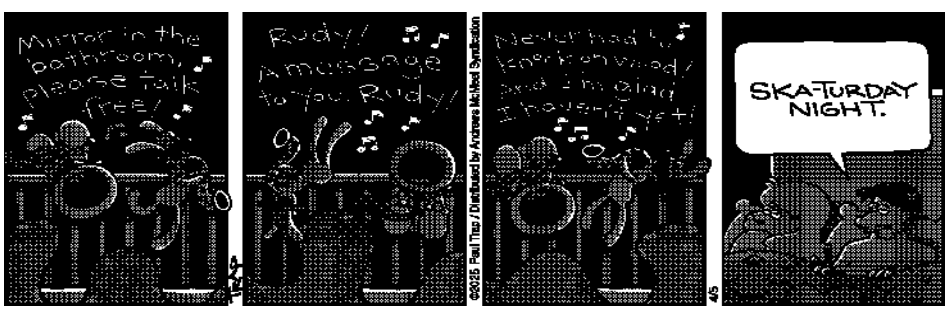
FRANK & ERNEST


GREAT MOMENTS IN SCIENCE
ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL MAKES THE FIRST TELEPHONE CALL.
"...IF YOU WANT WATSON TO COME, PLEASE PRESS ONE..."

GRIZZWELLS


I DON'T GET IT... I'VE GAINED TWENTY POUNDS
YOU MUST BE RETAINING FLUIDS
DO YOU REALLY THINK SO?
YES... THAT CASE OF COORS YOU GO THROUGH EVERY WEEK-END

THATABABY



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SODOKU PUZZLE

HOW TO PLAY: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

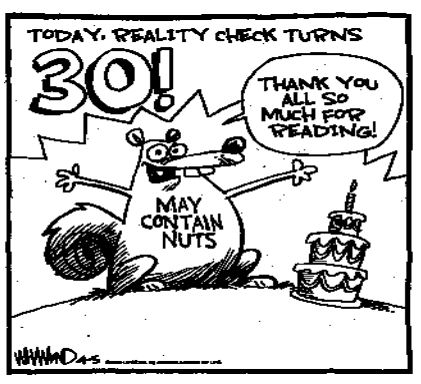
DIFFICULTY RATING: 5/5

ANSWER ON PAGE 6

	4			7				5
	7			4	5			
5		9	6			4		
4		8	5					9
				1				
2					7	6		1
		6			4	1		8
			1	3			9	
8				9			7	

MODERATELY CONFUSED

REALITY CHECK

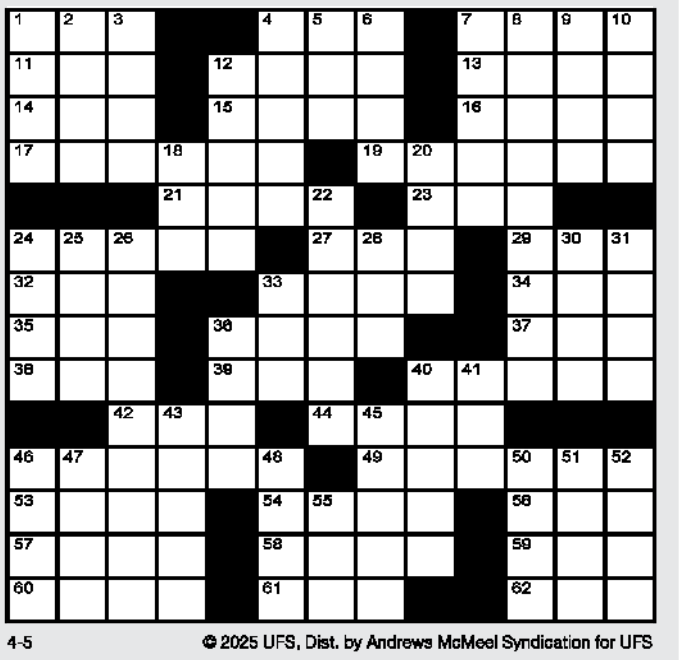


CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1 — for the course
4 Sweet potato
7 At a distance
11 Stopped a fast
12 Party
13 Performing group
14 Author — Levin
15 Dalai —
16 Sour
17 Sword used for thrusting
19 Vestiges
21 Furnish
23 Gallery contents
24 Fully developed
27 "— me no questions ..."
29 Battleship letters
32 — canto
33 Ready to eat
34 Actress Issa —
35 Winged animal
36 Ship of 1492
37 Common abbr.
38 — Baba
39 CPR expert
40 Student at Annapolis
42 Actor — von Sydow
44 Time past
46 Intelligence
49 Fast food fare
53 Dorothy's dog
54 War god
56 Sash
57 Burden
58 Extensive
59 Destiny
60 Fleshy fruit
61 Hurricane's center
62 Genetics letters

DOWN
1 Twosome
2 Razor brand
3 Do a farm job
4 Pine
5 PIN prompter
6 Vegetarian's no-no
7 Rose oil
8 Broken
9 River in England
10 Decomposes
12 Group of rental cars
18 Badly
20 Libertine
22 Small and delicate
24 "Fernando" band
25 Bargain
26 Final demand
28 Mineral spring
30 Satisfy
31 Denomination
33 Edge
36 Cashier's cry
40 Pie shell
41 Ireland's — Lingus
43 Came to be
45 Overweight
46 Halt
47 Stereo alternative
48 Except
50 First-place medal
51 Black
52 Actress — Moreno
55 Sunbeam

ANSWER ON PAGE 6



4-5

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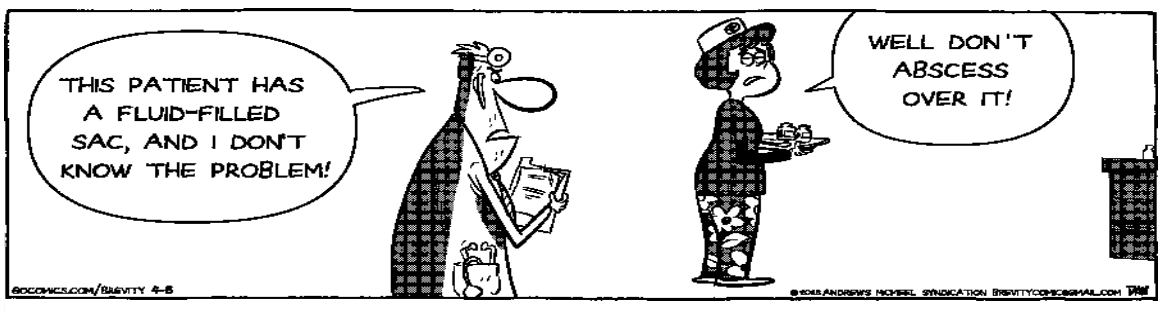
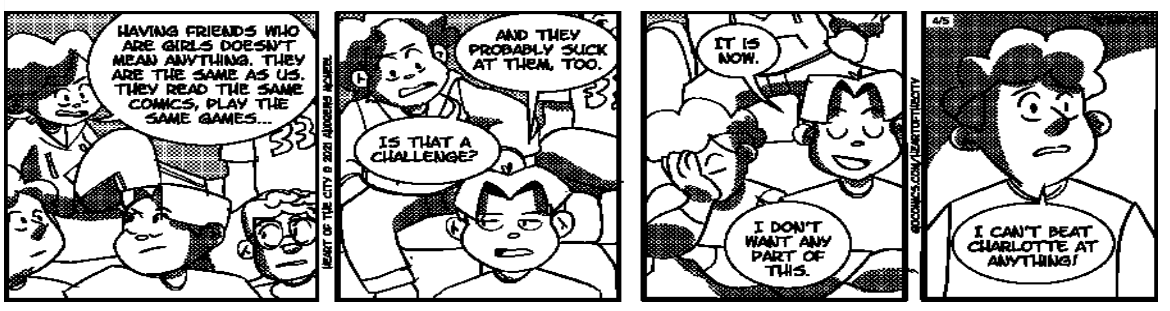
BREVITY



HEART OF THE CITY


HAVING FRIENDS WHO ARE GIRLS DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING. THEY ARE THE SAME AS US. THEY READ THE SAME COMICS, PLAY THE SAME GAMES...
AND THEY PROBABLY SUCK AT THEM, TOO.
IS THAT A CHALLENGE?
IT IS NOW.
I DON'T WANT ANY PART OF THIS.
I CAN'T BEAT CHARLOTTE AT ANYTHING!

DEATH NOTICES

Chisa Johnson Taylor, 45, passed away on Friday, March 21, 2025, in South Bend, Indiana. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Brenda Sue Reynolds, 81, of Niles, passed away Wednesday, March 26, 2025. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, of Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Patricia Hollis, 79, of Niles passed away Saturday, March 29, 2025 after a brief illness surrounded by her family. Arrangements have been entrusted and are pending with Brown Funeral Home.

Diane Kay Sink, 74, of Berrien Springs, Michigan, passed away on March 28, 2025, in Niles, Michigan. Services have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Elmer Alfred Bella, 100, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on Friday, March 28, 2025. Services have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Beverly Holt, 89, of Niles, passed away Sunday, March 30, 2025. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, of Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Willie Stohrer, 98, of Niles, passed away Wednesday, March 26, 2025. Funeral services will be held on Friday, April 11th starting at 2:00PM at Brown Funeral Home of Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Kathy Faye Jones, 67, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on Saturday, March 29. Services have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Sandra Lynn Walker, 61, of Niles, Michigan, passed away on Sunday, March 30, 2025. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Dwayne Mathis, 81, of Bridgman, passed away Saturday, March 29, 2025. Arrangements have been entrusted to and are pending with Brown Funeral Home, Niles.

Dee Wilson, 91 of Niles passed April 1, 2025. Mass of Christian Burial at St. Mark Catholic Church, Monday, April 7, 2025 at 11am with interment at Calvary Cemetery. BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

James Martin, 83, of Niles passed away on Sunday, March 30, 2025 at Hanson Hospice surrounded by those he loved. Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home, Niles.

Anthony McCabe, 55, Services are currently pending at Wagner Family Funerals, Connely Chapel.

OBITUARIES

Stephen Michael Dunifin

February 13, 2006 - March 26, 2025

Stephen Michael Dunifin, 19, of South Bend, Indiana, died Wednesday, March 26, 2025.

His life began February 13, 2006 in Niles, Michigan born to Michael Dunifin and Dannielle McMillan.

Stephen cherished his family more than anything. He was a very talented and artistic young man. He was very athletic: he enjoyed basketball, soccer, and going to the gym to workout. He was proud to play football his Senior year of high school. He was a 2024 graduate of Clay High School, which was the last graduating class before the school closed. All of his teachers loved him and was even a teacher's aid his Senior year. Stephen loved music and worked hard at learning how to play guitar. He was a hard worker and was very dedicated to the family he was building. He had an excitement for life and was motivated for the future.

Stephen will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his mother, Dannielle (Jesse) Jaynes of South Bend; his father, Michael Dunifin of Niles; fiancée, Shauna Buss of New Carlisle; Baby Boy on the way, Syair Michael; siblings, Hailey, Hunter, Alyssa, Michael, Landon, Jackson, Kayden, Mason; grandfathers, Matt Burns of Niles, Carl McMillan of Tennessee; great grandparents, Jim and Merva Zaleski; aunt, Alicia McMillan; favorite uncle, Lusman Roblero of South Bend; uncles, Matthew (Nikki) McMillan of the Carolinas, Austin McMillan of Niles; cousins, Chloe, Kate, Tate; and a host of friends.

He was preceded in death by his aunt, Ashley Roblero and his grandmothers, Carrie Burns, Beverly Dunifin Lewis.

Family and friends will gather Tuesday, April 1, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, 615 East Main Street, Niles. Family and friends will gather for a funeral service Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., with an hour of visitation prior in the funeral home.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Stephen be made to the family in anticipation of Baby Boy Syair Michael, c/o Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, 615 East Main Street, Niles, Michigan 49120.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

Mark L. Poehlman

January 25, 1951 - March 9, 2025

Mark L. Poehlman, 74, of Schoolcraft, died Sunday, March 9, 2025 in the comfort of his family's presence.

His life began January 25, 1951 in Lafayette, Indiana, born to Robert and Mary Poehlman. He married Teresa "Terri" Smith on October 29, 1977 in the First Baptist Church in Niles, Michigan. After nearly forty-three years of marriage, she preceded him in death on June 15, 2020.

Always an athlete, Mark was passionate about sports and was a lifelong fan of Notre Dame and Chicago-based teams. From track and football in his youth, to running marathons, golfing, and bowling in his adulthood, Mark loved to challenge himself. He was proud of his Italian heritage, celebrating it whenever he got the chance. Despite decades of gradually worsening lung disease—a result of decades of laborious jobs to support his family—he never failed to give a helping hand or a friendly word after a hard day's work. He often offered guidance to those around him and could find a way to connect with almost anyone. Mark enjoyed sharing his love of music with family and friends, frequently singing along and dancing to whatever was playing at the time, even if it was just a tune he remembered. A man with a gift for details and a strong sense of justice, he was always seeking to do what was right and fair. He had an affinity and appreciation for nature and animals, a value which he shared with his late wife and helped to inspire within their children.

Mark will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by two daughters, Angela (Greg) Schmoyer of South Bend, Indiana, Morgyn (Rachel Plotner) Poehlman of Portage; one son, Anthony Poehlman of Portage; six grandchildren, Monica, Joey, Anna, Nicholas, Andrew, Sophia; one great granddaughter, Rose; one sister, Lori Enboden of Buchanan; three brothers, Lee Poehlman of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Kirk (Peter Salathe) Poehlman of Carmel, Indiana, Mike (Janette) Poehlman of Miami, Florida; and a host of nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his beloved wife; one son, Nicholas Poehlman; and one brother, Kerry Poehlman.

Family and friends will gather for a memorial service Saturday, April 5, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. in St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church, 5855 East W Avenue, Vicksburg.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Mark be made to SPCA of Southwest Michigan, 6955 West KL Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49009.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

Willie Stohrer

September 8, 1926 - March 26, 2025

Willie Carl Stohrer, of Niles, Michigan passed away peacefully in St. Joseph, MI on March 26, 2025 at the age of 98 years.

Bill retired from Bendix/Allied Signal after thirty-nine years of service on December 31, 1991. He was employed as a service engineer in field service and later in the office as a service engineer. He was born September 8, 1926 in Ann Arbor, Michigan to Albert John Stohrer and Emma Bertha Haidle Stohrer. On May 25th, 1964 he married Thelma Steedman Sclater in Vancouver, B.C. Canada, who lived in Sydney, N.S.W. Australia and preceded him in passing on November 5, 2016. He is survived by his daughter and son in law, Charlotte Emma Stohrer Risser and Jason Risser of St. Joseph, Michigan and two granddaughters, Ava Caroline Risser and Sara Isabelle Risser. He is also survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Charles William Stohrer and Laura Vennie of Kalamazoo, Michigan. He was preceded in death by a brother, A.W. Stohrer and his spouse Patricia (Bellmore) Stohrer.

Bill graduated from University High School in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1944 and entered the U.S. Army (Infantry) in late 1944 being subsequently discharged in 1946. He eventually served overseas in Hawaii. He graduated from Western Michigan University in June 1951. After about 18 months at Kaiser-Frazer/Willow Run on the C-119 program he joined Bendix on Jan 26, 1953 remaining with Bendix until 12-31-1991. In addition to long assignments in Marietta, Georgia on the Lockheed C-130; PWA Florida on the J-58 engine; Burbank, California on the SR71; and Oklahoma City on the TF-30-P3 engine controls overhaul he had many other shorter assignments in the field. Some other assignments include Baltimore, MD B-57; Edwards A.F.B. F84, B-57 and C-131; Los Altos Moffett Field, T-56 engine wind tunnel tests; Eglin Field C-130 & T-56 cold tests; Northwest Airlines Minneapolis 501-D-13 controls overhaul; Qantas Sydney, Australia 501-D-13 controls overhaul; Winnipeg, Canada T-56 control overhaul, KLM Holland 501-D-13 control overhaul, etc.

In 1970-71 Bill ended field service to work full time in the Bendix Plant at South Bend, IN as a service engineer on various ongoing and new programs to provide technical support for field service reps and service tooling, test equipment, training, illustrated parts catalogs, provisioning documents and in house overhaul programs as required. Bill also worked with engineering to provide service input to better address drawing change control and service input to formal (ECP) engineering change control proposals. Bill started flying in 1944 as a civilian hobby and soloed in September 1944. He became a private pilot in 1949, instrument rated in 1967 and obtained a commercial license in 1968 to fulfill a desire to obtain these ratings but only as a hobby.

Bill attained his aircraft and engine mechanics license in 1951 which was applicable to his desired career choice. Bill produced and provided extensive training aid material for military, airline and aircraft factory flight line personnel.

Bill also produced and provided control overhaul training material for control overhaul personnel at air force depots, airlines and commercial facilities. Bill was a member of the Bendix Salaried Retirees Club.

Funeral services will be held on April 11, 2025, at 2:00 P.M. at Brown Funeral Home in Niles, Michigan, with a time of visitation beginning at 1:00 P.M. The funeral will conclude with full military honors performed by the U.S. Army and American Legion Post 51. Following cremation, a burial will be in Ann Arbor, Michigan, at Washtenong Memorial Park Cemetery by the immediate family where arrangements have previously been made. Bill had faithfully attended St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Niles, Michigan. Memorial contributions may be made in Bill's memory to Western Michigan University College of Aviation at 1903 W. Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Photos, condolences, and memories may be left for Bill's family at www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Marilyn Annette Barbour

August 8, 1942 - March 27, 2025

Marilyn Annette Barbour, 82, of Niles, died peacefully in the presence of her family, Thursday March 27, 2025. Her life began August 8, 1942 in South Bend, the third of four children born to Marshall and Goldie Ralston. She married Richard L. Barbour November 18,1972 in Osceola, Indiana.

Marilyn graduated from Niles High School in 1960. She later graduated from Bethel College in Mishawaka with two degrees. Marilyn proudly served in the United States Army during the Vietnam era. She was a member of the First Baptist Church of Niles for over twenty- five years. Marilyn loved comedy movies, watching the animals out the window and especially, going on trips with her children. Marilyn was a loving woman and wanted to tell everyone around, I love you, sometimes even singing it. Marilyn will be greatly missed by family and friends.

She is survived by two daughters, Abby (Rich) Baxter of Niles, Sheila (Greg) Cumberland of Tampa Florida; four sons, Donald Barbour of Niles, Jeff (Shannon) Barbour of Newburgh Indiana, Burton Barbour of Muskegon, Brett (Sarah) Barbour of Granger; eleven grandchildren; ten great- grandchildren; one sister, Lila Wallace of Niles; one brother, Edwin Ralston of Niles and

See OBITUARIES, Page A7

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CROSSWORD ANSWER
From Page 5

P	A	R			Y	A	M		A	F	A	R
A	T	E		F	E	T	E		T	R	I	O
I	R	A		L	A	M	A		T	A	R	T
R	A	P	I	E	R		T	R	A	C	E	S
			L	E	N	D		A	R	T		
A	D	U	L	T		A	S	K		U	S	S
B	E	L			R	I	P	E		R	A	E
B	A	T		N	I	N	A			E	T	C
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		M	A	X		Y	O	R	E			
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T	O	T	O		A	R	E	S		O	B	I
O	N	U	S		V	A	S	T		L	O	T
P	O	M	E		E	Y	E			D	N	A

SUDOKU ANSWER
From Page 5

6	4	3	9	7	1	2	8	5
1	7	2	8	4	5	9	6	3
5	8	9	6	2	3	4	1	7
4	1	8	5	6	2	7	3	9
3	6	7	4	1	9	8	5	2
2	9	5	3	8	7	6	4	1
9	3	6	7	5	4	1	2	8
7	2	4	1	3	8	5	9	6
8	5	1	2	9	6	3	7	4

PET OF THE WEEK

Tigger, a 1.5 year-old orange tabby male, is described as a true lovebug who delights in being held. Giving and receiving affection are Tigger's favorite things. He's additionally a huge fan of catnip toys and canned food. He is easy to please and would be a wonderful, handsome companion. He is neutered and current on shots. Contact Animal Aid at infoanimalaidswmi@gmail.com.

OBITUARIES

Continued from page A6

a host of nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband Richard L. Barbour, daughter, Michelle Thomas, sister, Annabel Williams; brother, Eugene Ralston, and her parents, Marshall and Goldie Ralston.

Family and friends will gather Thursday, April 17, 2025, 5:00 p.m. in the First Baptist Church 1446 East Main St. Niles, Michigan, with her service to follow at 6:00 p.m. She will be laid to rest in Mission Hills.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

DeFord "Dee" Wilson

November 26, 1933 - April 1, 2025

DeFord Wilson, (Dee), left this world on April 1, 2025, at the age of 91. He was born on November 26, 1933, in Starke County, Indiana. Dee's final days were spent surrounded by the love of his family.

Dee was the son of the late Fred Wilson and Berneice Wilson Udvardi and step-son of Frank Udvardi. His life was a testament to love and commitment, as evidenced by his loving marriage of sixty-seven years to Julie VanDyck. They exchanged vows on November 16, 1957 at St. Matthew's Catholic Church in South Bend, Indiana. Together, they raised a family that includes a son, Mark (Shelly) Wilson, and a daughter, Kathy Knoll (Larry Lewis). Dee's role as Grampy was one he held dear, delighting in the lives of his four grandchildren, Chad Wilson, Brooke (Colin) Klug, and Davis & Ethan Knoll. He has two great-grandsons, Nash and Coleson Klug. He is also survived by cousins Cheryle, Gloria, Margo, and Carla, who were like sisters to him.

Dee served his country with pride in the U.S. Navy, assisting as a medic to the U.S. Marine Corps at Parris Island, SC. His love of country and dedication to service was a hallmark of his character. Before his military service, he pursued higher education, earning a degree in mortuary science. Dee's professional life was marked by compassion and care as he worked for many years in the funeral industry. His career also spanned a successful tenure with Local Finance and later as a regional manager in the RV industry, working for many years at Dometic Corp. and Onan Corp. Dee's work ethic and leadership were respected by colleagues and associates alike. Dee was a respected landlord for many years and took pride in maintaining the properties and building lasting friendships with the tenants.

Throughout his life, Dee was deeply involved in his community. Since 1962, he was a proud 3rd & 4th degree member of the Knights of Columbus Council 708 Niles, the American Legion Post 51 in Buchanan, and the Papasan-Mamasan Korean War Veteran Association, where he forged lasting friendships and contributed to numerous charitable endeavors. His faith was a cornerstone of his existence, and for over fifty years he was a devoted member of St. Mark Catholic Church. Dee served the church as an active member of the Usher's Club, a role he fulfilled with unwavering dedication and a welcoming smile.

Dee's interests and hobbies were as varied as they were passionate. He had a love for travel, exploring the U.S. and abroad, and cherished the winters spent in Florida. A fervent Notre Dame fan, Dee rarely missed a game and his enthusiasm was often entertaining. Above all, family was the center of Dee's world. He relished in being "Grampy," a nickname that embodied the warmth and joy he brought to his grandchildren and great-grandchildren's lives.

Those who knew Dee will remember him as a man of deep faith, family and service. His loyalty, generosity, and work ethic were foundations of his character. Dee approached life with a friendly demeanor that drew people to him, and his kind spirit left a lasting impression on everyone he met.

Memorial contributions may be made in Dee's memory to Tunnel to Towers Foundation, 2361 Hylan Boulevard, Staten Island, New York 10306 or to St. Mark Catholic Church, 3 N. 19th Street, Niles, Michigan 49120.

A time of visitation will be held on Sunday, April 6, 2025 from 2:00 pm until 4:00 pm at Brown Funeral Home, Niles, MI, with a Recitation of the Rosary at 3:30 pm. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. Mark Catholic Church, 3 N. 19th Street, Niles, Michigan at 11 am on Monday, April 7, 2025 with Father Peter Rocca, C.S.C. and Brother Dennis Meyers, C.S.C. officiating. Full Military Honors will be rendered at Calvary Cemetery by the U.S. Navy and American Legion Post 51.

Dee's life story is one of love, service, and loyalty. He navigated the world with a generous heart, leaving a legacy of laughter, kindness, and cherished memories. As we say goodbye to Dee Wilson, we celebrate a life well-lived and a man dearly loved. He will be profoundly missed, but his spirit will continue to guide and inspire those who were fortunate enough to have known him.

Timothy Dowling

May 3, 1950 - April 2, 2025

Timothy Dowling, a respected and dedicated attorney for over 40 years, died on April 2, 2025 at the age of 74.

He was the beloved husband of Stacy and father of Caitlin and Kelly; brother of Patrick (Cathy) Dowling, Trish (Jeff Gillette) Dowling, and Sheila (Tim) Therrian; brother-in-law of Keith (Lori) Tobler and Matthew (Sandy) Tobler; and uncle of many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Michael and Margaret Dowling; and his brother, Michael Dowling, Jr.

A Memorial Visitation will be held on Monday, April 7, 2025 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Brown Funeral Home, 521 East Main Street, Niles. The interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers or charitable donations, the family requests acts of kindness in Tim's memory.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

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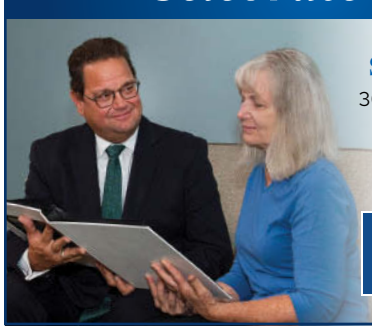

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Luna Marine & Storage celebrates expansion with ribbon-tying ceremony

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
From left: Don Lyons, Kris Soenen, Mike Luna, Mary Beth Luna, Dorothy Mottl.

DOWAGIAC — A Dowagiac business that provides boat and lake enthusiasts with a variety of services recently celebrated its expansion with the community.

Chamber of Commerce representatives and business owners recently gathered at Luna Marine & Storage, 56625 Woodhouse Dr. in the Dowagiac Industrial Park, celebrating the occasion with a ribbon tying ceremony.

A SouthBay boat dealer, the business offers certified Mercury and Suzuki Marine sales and service and marine, dock, lifts and storage solutions in Southwest Michigan, including boats, PWC's, RV's and more.

"We've been in business for a couple years here in this location, doing a lot with boats for the past few years, and expanded it into a larger scale," said Mike Luna, who co-owns Luna with his mother Mary Beth. "We service all makes and models, any type of watercraft. We're expanding into the powersports atmosphere as well."

He added that Luna Marine & Storage is expanding into a separate building next door that will be renovated into a showroom. For Mike and Mary Beth, bringing jobs to Dowagiac is one of their biggest goals.

"I used to hear stories about Dowagiac in the past and I love it," Mike said. "We're such a great community and the people here have been overwhelmingly supportive. We can't thank everybody enough for that. Our goal is to be here for a long time, do a lot of different sales and all different things."

Mayor Don Lyons was on hand to welcome Luna Marine & Storage to the community.

"What (this) represents to me, is a very healthy community," he said. "Healthy economically, healthy with the direction that it's going. So often when a business leaves and they leave a building vacant, it sits that way for years. When somebody sees an opportunity in that old building, comes into it, does what you're doing – that transforms what had been a derelict building into an asset for the community. We're seeing this all across the community; we just saw the old National Copper building get restored and fully functioning. The buildings have been sold and restored and back on the market, and these are being done by people from outside the area. In the case of National Copper, from Dallas, Texas.

"So when I see a local person stepping forward and doing it, that's even better. Congratulations."

For more information, contact Luna Marine & Storage at (269) 444-5862 or visit its website at lunamarine.com.

Wightman announces new ownership members

COMMUNITY REPORT

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Wightman board members and some of the promoted individuals include (from left to right) President Steve Carlisle, Board of Directors Treasurer Mary Nykamp, Board of Directors Secretary Philip A. Doorlag, new shareholder associates Fred Peters and Maria Benz-Weeden, Board of Directors Trustees Greg Monberg and Lee Petcu, Board of Directors Chairman Brian Lieberg, and new shareholder associate Derek Miller. Not available for photo: new shareholder associate Mike Lewallen.

BENTON HARBOR — Wightman, a full-service architecture, civil engineering, and surveying firm, has announced the appointment of four new associates to its ownership program.

This strategic decision underscores the company's dedication to developing and rewarding talent while creating a robust leadership pipeline for the future.

During the Board of Directors meeting, held March 26, four staff members were announced as new shareholders in the firm. The newly appointed Associates are Mike Lewallen, Maria Benz-Weeden, Derek Miller, and Fred Peters. Each of them brings exceptional experience and expertise to their respective roles.

Mike Lewallen has over 20 years of survey experience in the industry and joined the Wightman team in 2022. He is responsible for client development, processing survey data, drafting, scheduling field crews, and solving surveying challenges.

Maria Benz-Weeden, P.E., began her career at Wightman in 2020 as an engineering intern. Since then, she has become a licensed Professional Engineer with a strong background in bridges and culvert inspection and design, roadway construction, and site management.

Derek Miller, P.E., joined the Wightman engineering team in 2019, bringing with him five years of field experience. He received his P.E. license in 2022 and is focused on creating sustainable ideas and answers for municipal clients and in site design.

Fred Peters, P.S., began his career at Wightman in 2019 as a survey field technician through an internship. He returned in 2020 and 2021 before joining the team full-time in 2023. He achieved his professional Michigan surveyor license in 2025 and is responsible for developing client relationships, scheduling field crews, and providing accurate deliverables to clients.

Wightman also recognized the advancement of four outstanding team members—Samuel Leatch, Dan Yerks, Ryan Miller, and Mike Freeman—as they step into the Senior Associate level.

In addition, it was announced that Phil Doorlag, formerly a Senior Associate, has been elevated to Principal Associate, reflecting his dedication and leadership within the firm.

Brian Lieberg, P.S., Director of Surveying and Chairman of the Board of Directors, stated, "The addition of new owners to Wightman is a reflection of our firm's continued growth and success. Ownership is not just a title, it is a responsibility to our colleagues, our clients, and the communities we serve. Each new owner has earned the respect of their peers through their dedication, expertise, and commitment to Wightman's values. We are confident that their contributions will have a lasting, positive impact on Wightman's future."

The Board of Directors also reaffirmed its members during the annual shareholder's meeting. Lieberg serves as the Chairman, while Doorlag is the secretary, and Mary Nykamp is the treasurer. Trustees include Greg Monberg, AIA, and Lee Petcu, Jr.

At Wightman, being an employee-owned firm is fundamental to the firm's culture and success. It empowers staff, strengthens culture, and positions Wightman as a trusted advisor for the communities it serves.

For more information about Wightman's team and services, visit https://gowightman.com/.

County commissioners approve meeting schedule

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

ST. JOSEPH — Berrien County Commissioners have approved their night meeting schedule for the spring and summer. The county board will hold four night meetings in May through August.

While the county board held one of their night meetings in Niles last year, this year's night meeting schedule does not include a night meeting in either Niles or Buchanan.

The newly approved schedule does include meetings at two south county and two north county locations. The night meetings will start at 6 p.m. and will not include committee of the whole or individual committee meetings.

The May 1 meeting will be at the New Buffalo Township Public Safety Building and the June 4 meeting will be at 19 North Froehlichs in Three Oaks. The July 10 meeting is scheduled to be at the Watervliet Charter Township Hall, while the Aug. 7 meeting will be at the MSU Extension Office outside Benton Harbor.

The night meeting schedule was part of a meeting resolution approved by the board Thursday. It also states the dates the board will not meet due to a fifth Thursday of a month or a holiday. The fifth Thursday dates are May 29, July 31 and Oct. 30. The holiday dates are July 3 prior to the July 4 holiday and Sept. 4 during Labor Day week.

The schedule was approved without comment from the board but was commented on by a resident in attendance. Adolph Peltzer of Hagar Township attends most county board meetings and continues to ask for more night meetings during the year in order to attract more residents to the meeting.

Weekly county board meetings are held on Thursday mornings at the Berrien County Administration Center in St. Joseph and are streamed on YouTube. The offsite night meetings are not available remotely.

In addition to setting the night meeting schedule for the year, county commissioners approved a number of items at their meeting Thursday including updating three county policies, adding a staff member to the prosecutor's office, updating the Register of Deeds fee schedule and authorizing a speed study for a Berrien Township intersection.

The three policies updated were for solicitation on county property, political activity of employees and public speaking.

The solicitation update prohibits the posting of signs and ads or the distribution of flyers on county property that isn't directly connected to county functions. People also cannot solicit for signatures on petitions with in 30 feet of public entrances to county facilities.

The political activity policy adds language where elected officials cannot ask or allow a public employee to engage in political activities during working hours, wear badges or pass out campaign materials. In addition, no political signs, ads or flyers can be posted or distributed on county property.

The public speaking policy update delineates that statements made by elected officials, employees and citizen committee members are their own and not that of the county in general. The policy does not apply to public statements expressly authorized by law, the county board or elected officials.

The complement staff change in the prosecutor's office is for an additional evidence clerk/audio visual specialist to handle a growing amount of evidence that has to be processed.

The register of deeds fee schedule update adds fees for online searches to bring the office into line with other register of deeds offices and practices around the state. There will be a $1.50 fee per submission through the land records management software vendor and $1 per page for purchase of online search results.

The speed study will be done by the Berrien County Road Department for the Berrien Township intersection of Range Line Road, Snyder Road and Lake Chapin Road. Traffic in that area has increased in recent years and the intersection has seen a number of accidents.

BEACON HEALTH SYSTEM

BEACON

Continued from page A1

services prior to and after the closing.

"As a regional provider, Beacon Health System is positioned to serve patients through an integrated care delivery system to ensure that southwest Michigan has access to sustainable, quality health care long into the future," said Scott Cihak, FACHE, Chief Operating Officer of Ascension Michigan. "After an in-depth review, we found that our organizations are well-aligned culturally, which will streamline the integration process. Our communities are in good hands."

To learn more about the acquisition, visit beacon.health/bright-future.

VISA

Continued from page A1

and evolving industry. We are truly grateful to be the first to partner with Visa to offer our students such an exclusive opportunity."

For well over a decade, the Center for Career Development has worked with alumni, campus partners and employers to better prepare students to compete for top positions in the financial services industry. According to Willerton, strategic partnerships have resulted in a 400 percent increase in jobs for students after graduation, with seniors accepting more than 250 positions annually.

"Recognizing the trajectory of the financial payments industry, our career development staff, working under the University's centralized career services model, have sought opportunities like the partnership with Visa to raise awareness and help prepare students for evolving recruiting expectations and processes," Willerton said.

Students are selected for the Visa Fintech Foundations program by Center for Career Development staff based on students' interest in both financial services and technology-related career paths. As a non-credit initiative, the program allows for the selection of students studying a wide range of subjects regardless of individual educational requirements.

As a result, in 2024, 32 sophomore and junior students pursuing degrees in various Notre Dame colleges and schools were selected from a competitive pool of applicants to be a part of the inaugural cohort.

Along with six weeks of in-person presentations led by eight Visa leaders who traveled to Notre Dame from across the country each week, students were assigned to six teams to work collaboratively on a case study and invited to visit the Visa headquarters in San Francisco to present their findings at the conclusion of the program. There, students had the opportunity to engage more intentionally with Visa, tour its new Market Support Center and translate what they learned in the program through capstone presentations to a panel of senior Visa executives.

"The Visa Fintech Foundations program was an incredible learning experience for me, and I'm thankful to the entire Visa team for their dedication to providing my cohort with such insightful and engaging content and for welcoming us to their headquarters," said Mushfiq Milan, a Notre Dame senior majoring in business analytics and real estate. "I've gained a much deeper understanding of the fintech landscape, and the interactive sessions and capstone project have truly expanded my knowledge of the field."

The Visa Fintech Foundations program will return to Notre Dame in 2025. Applications for its second cohort will be made available in August, and on-campus sessions will begin in October. As a result of the program's success, Visa plans to replicate the program at other universities in the future.

"The fintech landscape is rapidly evolving, and Visa is committed to leading this transformation," said Jeremy Broome, senior vice president of global talent at Visa. "The Visa Fintech Foundations program is designed to uplift students with the critical skills and insights necessary to lead in the payments sector. Our partnership with the University of Notre Dame has proven the value of this initiative, and we are excited to bring this transformative experience to more campuses across the nation."

Niles Daily Star
Sports

GOT RESULTS?
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BASKETBALL

MHSAA: Everything We Do Begins with Participation

COURTESY OF MHSAA

For 100 years the MHSAA and its member schools have trumpeted the many benefits of educational athletics. The list of positive reasons to play has only grown.

But every idea and effort to make school sports excellent starts with one underlying theme that has served as a primary motivation from the beginning:

Participation.

The MHSAA long has been driven by a desire to see as many students participate in sports as possible, within a framework of rules that intentionally makes that opportunity so valuable that playing for the school team becomes the dream for thousands of kids all over our state.

And MHSAA member schools have a long history of succeeding at that mission.

A few comparisons and a decent share of context are necessary to explain how. We will dive into some numbers, but these two points sum up the story:

The total number of high school students in Michigan has been shrinking annually over several years – high-school aged population in this state is down 21 percent since 2006-07. But the numbers of students playing sports at MHSAA schools has grown three straight years and has declined by only 13.5 percent over the same stretch of time.

Michigan participation in high school sports annually outpaces where it ranked nationally in high school-aged population. We may have fewer students than some states, but more of them are playing more sports for their schools.

How do we know all this?

Every spring since 1971, the MHSAA has reported how many athletes from member schools participate – by sport – as part of a survey from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Those numbers are crunched by the NFHS for all 50 states and Washington, D.C., and over the last several years the MHSAA has taken that data and then compared how Michigan participation stacks up to state populations of people aged 14-17.

(The NFHS collects data on all school sports, whether they receive state association sponsorship or not. Participants also are counted once for every sport they participate in, so two-sport athletes are counted twice, three-sport athletes are counted twice, three-sport athletes are counted three times, etc.).

For this narrative's sake, let's start with the 1977-78 school. By then, several girls sports had begun to receive MHSAA sponsorship and also had a few years to get established and grow. For that school year, the MHSAA reported 242,616 participants. Just under a decade later, for 1985-86, that total had grown to 265,227 (and a few more girls sports had been added), and those totals continued to rise during the 1990s reaching 295,858 in 2000-01.

A key high point came in 2006-07, when the MHSAA reported 320,479 total participants in all sports at member schools including 313,093 in MHSAA-sponsored sports. The grand totals then shifted downward slowly once again – but in proportion to

See MHSAA, Page B2

BASKETBALL

Hidalgo named Wooden Award finalist

COMMUNITY REPORT

LOS ANGELES — For the second time in as many years, Hannah Hidalgo is a finalist for the top award in women's college basketball.

On Tuesday, the Irish sophomore was named one of five finalists for the John R. Wooden Award, which is given to the nation's best player.

Hidalgo averaged 23.8 points per game this season, breaking her own Notre Dame scoring record from last year (22.6). This year's mark currently ranks fifth in the country. Additionally, Hidalgo joined Irish legend Arike Ogunbowale as the only players in Notre Dame history to post multiple 700-point seasons.

The sophomore also finished the season with 119 steals, the Irish sophomore record. It is just the fourth time in program history a Notre Dame player has had a 100-steal season. Hidalgo did it last year as well (160).

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

BASKETBALL

NOTRE DAME FALLS TO TCU IN SWEET 16

COMMUNITY REPORT

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Notre Dame's season came to a close March 29 after the No. 3 seed Irish (28-6) fell in the Sweet 16 to No. 2 seed TCU (34-3), 71-62.

In what was her final collegiate game, Liatu King led Notre Dame with 17 points and 10 rebounds. Hannah Hidalgo had 15 and 4 steals. Olivia Miles also hit double-figures with 10 points, including a pair of triples.

As was the case in November when TCU beat Notre Dame in the Cayman Islands Classic, the Irish struggled to stop Hailey Van Lith (26 points) and Sedona Prince (21 points). The Horned Frogs shot 50 percent from the floor (22-24) and outrebounded Notre Dame 38-32.

In addition to King, Saturday was the final collegiate game for Irish seniors Sonia Citron, Liza Karlen and Maddy Westbeld.

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Expanded parking options available for South Bend Cubs home games in 2025

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, IN — Downtown South Bend has seen a number of new construction projects break ground especially near Four Winds Field.

As additional development around the ballpark grows, parking options have been limited. However in 2025, the South Bend Cubs are adding two new parking lots along with additional shuttles to help get fans to and from the stadium.

The E Lot, located at the northwest corner of Lafayette Boulevard and Western Avenue, will be open for all South Bend Cubs game and most special events. The lot sits directly across from the Gate D entrance in centerfield, between the Ivy at Berlin Place. Entrance to this lot is off Western Avenue only. Fans are encouraged to come from S. Main Street and head westbound on Western Avenue to avoid traffic backups going east.

The S Lot is located just south of the stadium on the south side of the Studebaker Building. This lot will only be open for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday South Bend Cubs games. Vehicles will enter the lot from Lafayette Boulevard by the guardhouse. This lot will also have a dedicated parking shuttle running before, during, and after the game.

"It's great to see more development happening around Four Winds Field to help grow the down

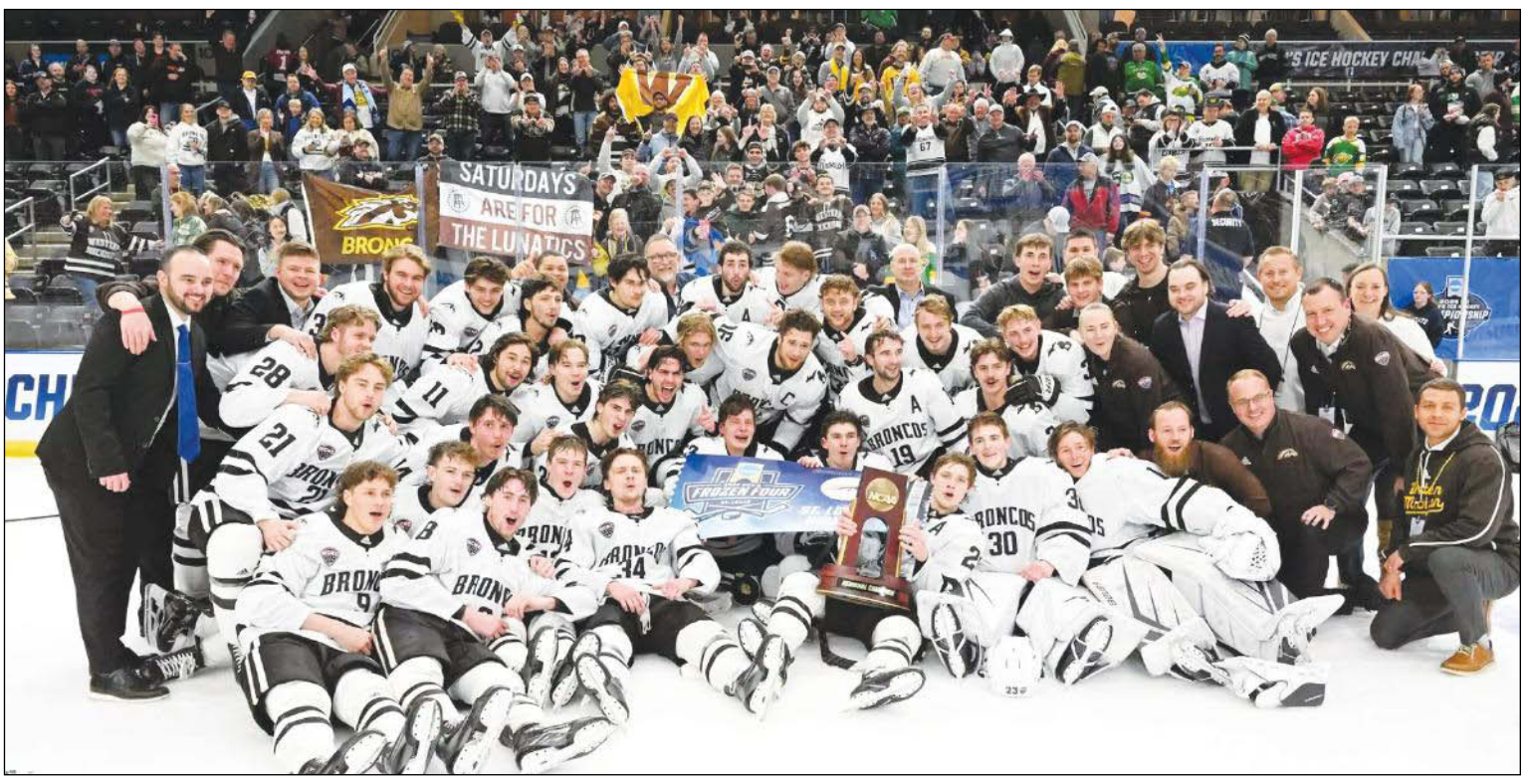
See PARKING, Page B2

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

HOCKEY

WMU punches ticket to Frozen Four with win Over UMass

COURTESY OF WMU ATHLETICS



SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

FARGO, N.D. — Western Michigan punched its ticket to the Frozen Four for the first time in program history with a 2-1 victory over UMass on Saturday night at Scheels Arena. The win was WMU's 32nd of the season, which ties a program record.

Special teams paved the way, as the Broncos tallied two power-play goals to claim the win. Liam Valente knotted the game in the second period, and Tim Washe provided the game winner in the third period. Hampton Slukynsky made 28 saves in net to earn his 17th win of the season.

Valente was named the Fargo Regional's Most Outstanding Player, while Samuel Sjolund and Hampton Slukynsky were selected to the All-Regional Team.

First period

The Broncos got the first shot of the game, as Grant Slukynsky fired a shot into the chest of the UMass goaltender. Slukynsky would get another chance a few moments later, but the Minutemen would clean up the trouble.

Eventually, UMass would get on the board in the middle portion of the first frame. Slukynsky then saved a trio of shots a few moments following that tally. With about four minutes left in the opening period, the Minutemen got the first power play of the night.

On the man advantage, WMU blocked two shots and Slukynsky made two saves to help the Brown and Gold get back to even strength. Down the stretch, Robby Drazner would get one more chance for the Broncos, but UMass carried a one-goal lead into the middle stanza.

Second period

Owen Michaels had a shot on net nearly tie the game, but UMass was again able to clear the chance. A little later, Bump tried his luck on net, and he was denied. Things started to heat up in the back half of the middle frame.

WMU was given a tripping penalty with about seven minutes left in the period. Slukynsky made a save on the Minutemen's lone shot, and the Broncos worked back to full strength. Following that, WMU got its first power play of the night. The Brown and Gold got three high-quality chances, but nothing would find the back of the net. UMass returned to even strength.

However, just a few moments later, the Minutemen were assessed a major and game misconduct for boarding. That gave the Broncos five minutes on the power play. It didn't' take long for Western Michigan to strike, as Valente ripped a one-timer into the back of the net to tie the game about 20 seconds in.

UMass would get to the end of the frame, but WMU carried 3:14 of power play time into the third period.

Third period

With time ticking down in the major penalty, Brian Kramer zipped a shot at the net, and Washe redirected it into the net to give the Broncos a 2-1 advantage.

However, a little bit after that, WMU was given a major penalty. That set UMass up on a five-minute power play of its own. As it has all season, Western Michigan stood tall on the penalty kill and got back to full strength. Slukynsky saved one shot and the Broncos blocked three others on the crucial kill.

UMass eventually pulled its goalie to try and knot the game at 2-2. The Broncos fended off three shots and forced a faceoff outside of the zone with three seconds left. WMU won the faceoff and the party began on the ice. Players jumped over the boards and lifted the Regional Championship trophy.

Western Michigan will head to St. Louis for the Frozen Four in a couple weeks. The Broncos will see the winner of Denver and Boston College.

Sharp leadership synonymous with MHSAA's success

COURTESY OF MHSAA

LANSING — Just as an organization often will rise and remain successful when there is consistent leadership, so is consistent leadership often a hallmark of a successful organization.

In celebrating a "Century of School Sports," it's no stretch to say the Michigan High School Athletic Association has been successful in its continued promotion and administration of educational athletics thanks in part to consistent excellent leadership in the form of only five fulltime executive directors, and two more directors who also took turns leading the organization through some of its most difficult moments.

Two of the MHSAA's first four executive directors (who are retired, and therefore eligible for the honor) have been inducted into the National High School Hall of Fame by the National Federation of State High

See LEADERSHIP, Page B3

MHSAA

Continued from page B1

falling student enrollment at MHSAA member schools, which has dropped nearly 113,000 students (21 percent) since that notable year. It's also fair to make an educated guess – because students are counted once for every sport played – that a trend toward sport specialization also affected those numbers to some degree.

Fast forward to today. For the 2023-24 school year, there were 270,664 participants in MHSAA sports, plus another 19,920 in sports not sponsored by the association (weight lifting, etc.). So while Michigan hasn't approached 300,000 participants in more than a decade, the total for MHSAA sports this past year was only 13.5 percent fewer than that 2006-07 season – again, compared to 21-percent fewer students at those schools. And the even better news? Participation has increased three straight years coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another telling comparison is how Michigan participation continues to compare nationally.

Going back to at least the 2012-13 school year – not counting 2019-20 and 2020-21, when the NFHS survey was suspended because of COVID-19's effect on school sports – Michigan consistently has ranked either seventh or eighth in participation nationally, falling past that ranking only once to ninth. For 2023-24, Michigan ranked eighth for participation.

Meanwhile, Michigan ranked ninth nationally for high school-aged population from 2012-13 through 2015-16 before sliding into its current 10th spot on that list. So for this past school year, participation at MHSAA member schools ranked two spots ahead of its ranking for high school-aged population.

The first step to receiving the benefits of school sports is getting out there and playing them. And Michigan high schoolers are continuing to do so – both at rates that compare well historically over the last 50 years, and compared to states across the country of similar sizes. This has long been a point of MHSAA pride, and will continue to be a primary focus of its work.

PARKING

Continued from page B1

town area," said South Bend Cubs Team President Joe Hart. "We understand that on our busiest nights, parking can be a challenge, which is why we are grateful to Mark Neal, owner of the Hibbert building and Kevin Smith, owner of the Studebaker building, who are working with us to provide additional parking options for our fans."

In total, eight lots will be open for every game and twelve lots available on weekends and sold-out games. The S Lot will be open on the weekends and the Saint Patrick and Saint Hedwig Parish lots on Western Avenue will be open when the closer lots around the ballpark fill up. Lot C will not be open during games with fireworks as that lot is used for the pyrotechnic spectacular. Lot A is reserved for suite holders only.

Premium Reserved Parking returns for the 2025 season and is located in Lot B. Fans can purchase a spot in this lot in advance for just $15. Spots are limited in number and are reserved up to 30 minutes after the scheduled first pitch of the game.

Handicapped parking is available in all paid South Bend Cubs lots. Additionally, handicapped spaces are available along the stadium side of South Street and a designated pickup / drop off area is located directly in front of the Box Office on South Street. Standard parking, purchased on gameday is $10 and all parking lots are cashless.

Shuttle service, presented by Zolman's & Monteith's Best One Tire & Auto Care, will once again be available for fans to get from each lot to the gate. You can ask a parking attendant, and they can radio the shuttle for you if you require or want assistance getting to the park.

BASKETBALL

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

GVSU women win D2 National Championship

COURTESY OF GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

PITTSBURGH, PENN. — For the second time in program history, the GVSU women's basketball team are National Champions. The Lakers took down California State-Dominguez Hills 70-58 March 28 in the championship game to win the title for the first time since the 2005-06 season.

The win puts a bow on top of a fantastic season for the Lakers, in which they went 38-2, the most wins in a single season in program history. They won the GLIAC regular season and tournament titles, then the Midwest Regional title. 37 of the wins were by double-digits, and they led the country in scoring margin at 30.3.

The CSUDH press gave the Lakers trouble to begin the game, giving them a 7-2 lead after four minutes of action. GVSU settled in and made a 7-0 run, with Ellie Droste scoring the first five, to put them up 9-7. It remained tight over the next few minutes, but with the game tied at 11, GVSU end the quarter on a 6-1 run to lead 17-12 after 10 minutes.

That momentum carried over into the second period, as the Lakers started on a 9-1 run to pushed their lead up to 26-13. The advantage would never dip into single-digits the rest of the way. It grew to as much as 19 points at 38-19, but a late Toro bucket made it 38-21 heading to halftime.

A 9-0 Laker run started off the second half, pushing the Laker lead up to 47-21. The Toros started to chip into the Laker lead, ending the quarter on a 17-6 run to only trail 53-38 with one quarter to play.

After CSUDH got their deficit down to 12 two minutes into the fourth quarter, GVSU got two free thrwos from Paige Vanstee and a triple from Rylie Bisballe to push the lead back to 17 points. The Toros would not go away, going on a 13-6 run to get within 10 points with 35 seconds remaining. The Lakers would not let them get any closer, with both Ellie Droste and Abrie Cabana knocking down two free throws to ice the game away.

Tournament MVP Rylie Bisballe scored 13 points, adding six boards, three assists, and three steals. MacKenzie Bisballe earned All-Tournament Team honors, dropping a team-high 14 points, recording four rebounds, two blocks, and two steals. Ellie Droste scored 11 points and Paige Vanstee had eight points. Nicole Kamin was also named to the All-Tournament team, tallying six boards, three assists, three points, and two steals.

With the victory, the graduating senior class of Rylie Bisballe, Hadley Miller, Ellie Droste, Abrie Cabana, and Kathryn Schmidt end their careers with 145 wins, the most of any graduating class. They were a part of four regular season GLIAC titles, three GLIAC tournament titles, two Midwest Regional Championships, and now one National Championship.

LEADERSHIP

Continued from page B2

The first fulltime director – Charles E. Forsythe – became Michigan's first Hall of Fame selection in 1983. The most recently-retired executive director – Jack Roberts – was selected in 2022.

School Associations (NFHS). The first fulltime director – Charles E. Forsythe – became Michigan's first Hall of Fame selection in 1983. The most recently-retired executive director – Jack Roberts – was selected in 2022.

All five executive directors have had monumental impacts on the direction of school sports in Michigan, not just during their time leading the MHSAA but in their various roles leading up to their service at the top of the organization. The below summaries do not come close to stating their full contributions, but merely some of the highlights for which they are most remembered:

Charles E. Forsythe (1931-42, 1945-68)

The MHSAA's first fulltime executive director literally wrote the book on leadership of school sports programs – "The Administration of High School Athletics" was first published in 1939 and in five more editions as it became a popular college-level textbook. Previously an accomplished athlete, coach, official and athletic director, Forsythe joined the MHSAA staff in 1929 as an assistant director – and during his long tenure leading the office, school sports became part of the lifeblood of communities large and small all over the state. High school membership increased under his leadership, from 600 to 750 schools, and attendance for the MHSAA Boys Basketball Tournament – the headlining high school event of the day – increased from 126,000 for all rounds in 1930 to more than 775,000 at the time of his retirement. While advances were made in football and boys basketball, and in less-visible sports as well – all driving increased participation – the most notable work under Forsythe's leadership made sports safer for all participants. Many of the most publicized safety initiatives came in football – including significant equipment requirements – but under his leadership the MHSAA in 1940-41 became just the second state nationally to add an accident benefit plan for participants. Forsythe died unexpectedly in December 1968, only a few months after his retirement. He is the namesake for the MHSAA's annual lifetime achievement award.

Allen W. Bush (1968-78)

The MHSAA's second fulltime executive director is the namesake for annual awards presented to contributors to school sports whose accomplishments are often behind the scenes and outside of the attention paid to championships and other high achievements. But Bush's most-known accomplishments have received some of the greatest attention in MHSAA history, and deservedly so. During his tenure, the MHSAA added its first nine championship tournaments in girls sports, created the Football Playoffs and also began awarding Finals championships in baseball, ice hockey and skiing. Bush joined the MHSAA staff in 1960, serving under Forsythe as an assistant and then associate director.

Vern L. Norris (1978-86)

Norris, who died in 2018 at the age of 89, was known especially for his work with coaches and officials. He had coached at three high schools and was a tremendous official himself, having refereed the 1963 Class A Boys Basketball Final. The MHSAA's annual Vern L. Norris Award honors an official who has been especially active in mentoring and training officials. Norris joined the MHSAA in 1963 and served under both Forsythe and Bush – the latter as associate director – also playing key roles in the creation of girls sports championships during the 1970s and expansion of those opportunities during the 1980s. He also played a significant role in rules-making nationally, contributing on several NFHS committees, and after leaving the MHSAA served as commissioner of the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

John E. "Jack" Roberts (1986-2018)

At the time of Roberts' retirement, he was the nation's longest-serving executive director – and with accomplishments in his state and nationally that were arguably unmatched. Under his leadership, the MHSAA grew more than 15 percent to more than 1,500 high schools and junior high/middle schools, and the state's high school sports participation grew 10 percent and annually ranked higher than states with larger high school-aged populations. The MHSAA again became a national leader in health and safety, setting the pace in concussion care, heat management and CPR certification requirements and policies. The MHSAA also took national leads in coaches education and sportsmanship. Three girls sports and two boys sports were added to the tournament lineup during his tenure, as were 8-player football playoffs and an expansion of the 11-player tournament. Roberts had grown up studying the example of his father John, who served as executive director of the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association for 29 years, and Jack Roberts also served at the NFHS and Fellowship of Christian Athletes before taking over the MHSAA. Few have given their voice to school sports more prevalently: At the time of his retirement, Roberts had spoken in support of educational athletics in nearly every state and five Canadian provinces.

Mark Uyl (2018-)

While his tenure as executive director has not yet reached a decade, Uyl already has steered the MHSAA through one of its most challenging times – the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the cancelation of the end of the Winter 2019-20 season and all sports the ensuing spring. However, under Uyl's direction – and while other states remained sidelined – MHSAA schools safely returned to activity during the fall of 2020-21, and despite delays completed their championship events for all three seasons that school year. Also a highly-respected game official on a national scale – and past coach and administrator in Michigan – Uyl joined the MHSAA staff in 2004 and has led the way as participation and officials registrations both have continued to rebound from significant decreases during COVID. His tenure also has seen the addition of an Individual Finals division for girls wrestling and the addition of girls field hockey and boys volleyball set for the 2025-26 school year.

Additional notes of recognition must be paid to two more leaders whose contributions came at some of the most delicate times over this successful century:

Julian W. Smith served as interim executive director while Forsythe served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Smith – who had served on the MHSAA Representative Council for 10 years – received a three-year leave of absence from his role as principal at Battle Creek Lakeview High School and led the MHSAA through an unpredictable wartime era that included the cancelation of statewide championship events in boys basketball and track & field in 1943, but also their return a year later. He continued the promotion of physical fitness that was emphasized as a mission of school sports especially in preparation for service in the military, and during his time as executive director was named to the National Council of Physical Fitness.

Then there is Alden W. "Tommy" Thompson, perhaps the most influential yet forgotten leader in MHSAA history. Thompson had served on the Board of Control for the MHSAA's predecessor organization, the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) and was then appointed as the first state director of interscholastic athletics, under supervision of the state superintendent and Michigan Department of Public Instruction, about three weeks before the official start of the MHSAA in December 1924.

Charles Forsythe credited Thompson with building the MHSAA "from scratch," and legendary Lansing State Journal sports editor George Alderton praised Thompson for developing "an eligibility code that was positively fool proof," classifying schools by enrollment to provide equal opportunities for small and large to win championships, organizing the state basketball tournament to make it financially beneficial to schools which in turn allowed them to spend to develop other sports, and giving a statewide stage to some of those less-visible sports including cross country, tennis and golf. Alderton wrote, "Tommy was the fellow who paved the way, ironed out the humps and gave the machine a push before the motor of popular interest began running."

Forsythe served as Thompson's assistant for two years before taking over as state director of athletics in 1931 as Thompson became the state director of physical and health education. However, both would lose their employment with the state's department of public instruction in 1933 due to budgetary cuts – Thompson, to go on to several more pursuits in athletics, but Forsythe to remain as state director of athletics but now paid fully by the MHSAA, making him officially the association's first fulltime executive director.

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Public Notices

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF NILES BERRIEN COUNTY NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING (Draft New Zoning Ordinance)

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Public Notices

the City of Niles Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing on **April 23, 2025 at 5:30PM Local Time** for the purpose of receiving public comments on a proposed new Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map for the City of Niles to amend and replace the existing Zoning Ordinance adopted on January 22, 2007, pursuant to the Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended. The public hearing will be held at the Niles City Hall at 333 North Second Street in Niles, Michigan, 49120. Comments may be made in person during the public hearing or written comments may be submitted beforehand. Written comments should be received by the City by **12:00 p.m. (noon)** on the day of the public hearing and addressed to the City of Niles Planning Commission, 333 North Second Street, Niles, MI 49120, or emailed to communitydevelopment@nilesmi.org.

A summary of the proposed new Zoning Ordinance is as follows:

Article 1: Title, Purpose, Scope

This Article discusses the title and purposes regarding the proposed new Zoning Ordinance. The new ordinance shall be known as the "City of Niles Zoning Ordinance." There are multiple purposes supporting the new Zoning Ordinance.

Article 2: Definitions

This Article contains the definitions of various words, phrases, and clauses for purposes of the Zoning Ordinance.

Article 3: General Provisions

The use of all land, structures, construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair and moving of all structures within the City of Niles shall conform with all applicable provisions of this Ordinance unless the nonconformance is a matter of record on the effective date of this Ordinance.

Article 4. Zoning Districts, Land Use Table and Zoning Map

This Article discusses the purpose of this Ordinance, an overview of dimensional requirements and district regulations. This Article includes the City of Niles Zoning Ordinance Map.

Article 5. District Regulations

This Article sets forth an intent statement, provides for permitted uses, special land uses, dimensional standards, and other requirements for properties in the R-1, R-2, CB, NC, RC, OC, IND, OS, MHP, and WHP District.

Article 6. Reserved for Future Use

This Article is blank at this time and is reserved for future use.

Article 7. Signs

This Article sets for a purpose and intent, sign definitions, sign permits, exempt signs, prohibited signs, general sign provisions, nonconforming signs, temporary signs and permanent signs in the R-1, R-2, CB, NC, RC, OC, IND, OS, MHP, and WHP District.

Article 8. Special Land Uses

This Article contains standards and regulations for the review of applications for special land use approval. It also contains standards for specific land uses, including, but not limited to, accessory buildings, accessory dwelling units, adult uses, airports, places of assembly, bed and breakfast establishments, contractor's facilities, camps or campgrounds, car wash, cemeteries, commercial establishments with drive-throughs, construction equipment sales and supplies, day care, vocational school or trade school, foster care, funeral homes, galleries and museums, gasoline station, golf courses, home based business, hotels and motels, kennels and animal clinic, laboratories, dry cleaning establishments, self-storage, nursing homes, taverns and lounges, retail business, sand and gravel mine, social club, recreational facility, marihuana establishments, vehicle repair facility, and wireless communication tower.

Article 9. Site Development Standards

This Article states the purpose and intent of the site plan review, site plan review procedure and requirements, Planning Commission Review, procedures for review and approval, and performance standards. This Article contains general requirements and regulations for general parking provisions applicable to all districts, schedule of parking requirements and off-street loading requirements. This Article discusses general standards for landscape materials and ground cover, screening requirements, parking lot landscaping, interior parking lot landscaping, and suggested native plant species. This Article also includes regulated lighting, lighting plan requirement, and stormwater management and procedures.

Article 10. Planned Unit Development

This Article contains the regulations, specifications, procedures, and other matters regarding the Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district.

Article 11. Administration & Enforcement

This Article discusses and regulates many matters regarding the general administration and enforcement of the new Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map, as well as the penalties for violations. The topics covered by this Article include, but are not limited to, the zoning administrator, zoning permits, performance guarantees, zoning amendments, public hearings, performance guarantees, application fees and escrow accounts, proof of ownership, public hearing notice requirements, enforcement, and applications.

Article 12. Zoning Board of Appeals

This Article authorizes and regulates the Zoning Board of Appeals, including its creation, meetings, types of appeals, jurisdiction, application procedures, decisions, variances, effects of approval, and appeals of the decisions of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Article 13. Separability, Repealer, Savings and Effective Date

If any piece of this Ordinance is adjudged by any court of competence jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgement shall not affect the remainder of the Ordinance, but confined to the piece that directly involves the controversy in which the said judgment shall be rendered. The former Zoning Ordinance, and all amendments thereto, are herby repealed. The repealed shall not release any penalty or liability and treated as remaining in force. This Ordinance shall become effective twenty (20) days following the date of its enactment.

A full copy of the proposed Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map can be reviewed, inspected, or purchased at the Niles City Hall during regular business hours, Monday through Thursday, 7:30AM to 5:30PM and Friday 7:30AM to 11:30PM. or viewed via the City of Niles website at www.nilesmi.org. The City of Niles will provide necessary auxiliary aids and services at the hearing, such as signers for the hearing impaired, upon seven (7) days' prior notice to the City of Niles by writing or calling the following: Ann Young, Community Development Director, 333 North Second Street, Niles, MI 49120; Telephone (269) 683-4700 ext. 3020. This notice is disseminated and posted pursuant to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA110 of 2006, as amended.

Respectfully submitted by,
Ann Young
Community Development Director City of Niles

Niles Daily Star:
Apr. 5, 2025
HEARING 04.05.25

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF SELF STORAGE SALE

Please take notice Just Simple Storage - Menominee located at N710 County Rd 577, Menoninee, MI, 49858 intends to hold an auction of storage units in default of payment. The sale will occur as an online auction via www.storagetreasures.com on 4/17/2025 at 12:00PM. Unless otherwise stated in the below list of Unit #'s the contents are household goods, furnishings and garage essentials. Unit #13. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice.

Niles Daily Star:
Mar. 29 and Apr. 5, 2025
L2L-57240

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Niles Daily Star
Mar. 29 and Apr. 5, 2025
STORAGE AUCTION

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Berrien COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate
CASE NO. and JUDGE
2025-0175-DE-M
Court address 811 Port Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085
Court telephone 269-983-7111

Estate of Mary Elizabeth Backus, deceased
Date of birth:* May 29 1952
TO ALL CREDITORS:**
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Mary Elizabeth Backus, died January 2, 2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Crystal L. Kehoe and Robert S. Harris, personal representative(s), or to both the probate court at 811 Port Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
03/27/2025

Crystal L. Kehoe
16035 Meadowview Dr.
Buchanan, MI 49107

Robert S. Harris
24 N. Barrett St.
Niles, MI 49120
269-362-3223

John R. Colip P25250
12 Longmeadow Village Drive, Suite 100
Niles, MI 49120
269-591-6915

Niles Daily Star: Apr. 5, 2025
EST/BACKUS, M.

Legal Notices

LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLICATION NOTICE

In the Matter of the Donald B. Metzger and Norma J. Metzger Joint Self Trust Agreement
Social Security No. - LAST 4 8143
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS;
Your interest in the property of the deceased may be barred or affected by this Notice.
NOTICE: Please take notice that Donald B. Metzger died on February 25, 2020 and Norma J. Metzger died March 20, 2025. At the time of death, there were no assets requiring administration through Court proceedings. All assets were jointly held, had designed succession or were part of the Donald B. Metzger and Norma J. Metzger Joint Self Trust Agreement.
Marcia J. Gunzelman is the Trustee. The deceased lived at 1147 South 3rd Street, Niles, MI 49120.
Creditors of the deceased are notified that all claims against the deceased will be forever barred unless presented to the Trustee or the attorney for the Trust or to both within four (4) months of the date of publication of this Notice. Notice is further given that the Trust assets will then be assigned to persons designated in the Trust.

Dated: March 27, 2025

John R. Colip (P25250)
12 Longmeadow Village Drive, Suite 100 Niles, MI 49120
Phone: (269) 695-3849

Marcia Gunzelman
9107 Polk Street Omaha, NE 68127 Phone: (402) 672-8833

Niles Daily Star:
Apr. 5, 2025
EST/METZGER, D.

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2. **Free standard installation** applies to new Lease subscribers only. Not valid with Purchase option. Limited-time offer. Restrictions may apply.
3. Per the "5th, 6th, 7th and 8th FCC Measuring Broadband American Reports." Go to: https://www.hughes.com/who-we-are/resources/press-releases/
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